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Reflections On Gorbachev's Policies and East-South Relations by Ambassador Vernon A. Walters

University of Miami
Graduate School
of International Studies

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Ambassador Vernon A. Walters

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A Note from the Editor

Gorbachev's internal politics of *perestroika* and *glasnost* and his foreign policy dynamism—including strategic arms reduction, a troop withdrawal from Afghanistan, and new initiatives vis-a-vis other regional conflicts in the Third World—call for a serious, comprehensive inquiry by U.S. policymakers and analysts. The relevancy of such discussion is heightened during this year of presidential campaign and election.

In the interest of exploring these issues, the Institute for Soviet and East European Studies (ISEES) of the Graduate School of International Studies has assembled a small, select group of Miami community members prominent in the world of business, opinionmaking and education who are joined by former diplomats, such as Ambassador Ruth Lewis Farkas, Ph.D., and ISEES fellows research assistants and Ph.D. students.

On January 8, 1988, this group, supported by Mr. Ted Rubel, Mr. Irving Kern, and Mr. Irwin Schwartz, joined together for the first in a series of ISEES luncheons to discuss "Gorbachev's reforms: Challenge or Opportunity". The speaker was The Honorable Vernon Walters, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations.

I believe the reader will benefit from Ambassador Walters' insights into the importance of the Russian historical tradition on Soviet foreign policymaking as well as his intimate knowledge of East-South issues such as Soviet relations with Cuba, Afghanistan, Nicaragua, and Cambodia. I was particularly struck by the relevance of Ambassador Walters' observations on Cuba and U.S.-Cuban relations, mindful that the Ambassador has probably spent more time with Fidel Castro, than any other senior American official. Ambassador Walters' observations about Mikhail Gorbachev's personal background and politics are equally fascinating.

Ambassador Walters is one of the nation's most distinguished and respected public servants, a brilliant writer, and an accomplished linguist (with perfect command of several disparate languages including Russian), and a leading specialist on communist affairs. His address was instructive, thought-provoking and lively, receiving wide and positive coverage in the local media. A selection of the articles reporting on his address is included here. I am delighted to bring his testimony to publication in an ISEES Occasional Paper.

Sincerely,

Jiri Valenta
Director, ISEES

From left: Dean Ambler H. Moss, Jr., Ambassador Vernon A. Walters, Professor Jiri Valenta.

Introduction

If one tried seriously to give a decent introduction of Ambassador Walters, it would take most of an afternoon. It is absolutely an impossible task, because, in addition to utter fluency in several languages, one should mention also that he has been a top advisor, negotiator, trouble-shooter, interpreter for at least six presidents that I can name on my fingers, and perhaps even more. He actually began his career as an internationalist during World War II. Of course, the U.S. government works in very mysterious ways, and the very start of Ambassador Walters' career was in Italy during World War II, when he was sent to be liaison officer with the Portuguese detachment because they knew he spoke Spanish. They did not perceive that between Spanish and Portuguese there was some difference; it actually mattered little, since Vernon Walters learned Portuguese in about two months, and he was off and running. It has been that way ever since.

Although he is a great friend of my in-laws and I have been acquainted with him for a long time, I first knew Ambassador Walters professionally when I served as ambassador to Panama. One small incident, I think, will serve to illustrate his inestimable value as a diplomat. Ambassador Ruth Farkas [former ambassador to Luxembourg] is here too, and as a former practicing diplomat, she knows what I mean by the practice of diplomacy. Vernon Walters is really a role model of what American diplomats should be. We have a long, long way to go to get there, as we all know, and for lots of reasons. But let me tell you an example of why he is a good diplomat. In March 1981, just having come back into the government, working for Secretary of State Alexander Haig, Ambassador Walters was in Chile, working his way up the hemisphere, and he was due to make a stop in Panama. I discovered that the whole top command of the Socialist International was meeting in Panama on the very day that Ambassador Walters was going to be there, and I wondered if this might create any diplomatic difficulties and any particular problems, so I sent a message to Santiago to notify him and to ask if he saw any problems in the coincidence of his visit with their meeting. Ambassador Walters shot right back, "absolutely not; see if you can get them together so I can meet with them."

So I invited them all to a breakfast in the Embassy residence, and the Socialist International working the way it does, the members convened late at night, argued and wrangled and fought with each other until about five in the morning, and got a couple of hours of sleep. But, believe it or not, they all showed up for breakfast, because they were dying to meet Ambassador Walters. They were all sitting around the table because here was a Reagan administration appointee, and they were going to see him for the first time. They had heard about him, they knew the CIA connection, they knew all these things. We saw all these eyes peering around the breakfast table, and in about five minutes the crowd was with him, so to speak. I will never forget that he started off by saying, "We don't believe in military governments, because military governments are never a permanent solution, except in certain countries I won't name." And the more he spoke, the more their eyes began popping out. The audience began warming up, and my next worry was that a certain gentleman seated across the table, from a Caribbean country that I won't name, a man who, according to our intelligence files, had formally been what we know in the trade as a card carrier, was going to leap across the table and kiss him.

He was so delighted with what Ambassador Walters was saying. This is the mark of a good diplomat. Without ever compromising what is important and fundamental to the interests of the United States, without ever compromising what is the policy of the administration which he serving—and he has served many—at the same time, immediately, he can establish that human contact because of the language, because of knowing the culture, because of

knowing the position, the shoes in which the other person stands. By knowing those things, he establishes that bond of communication which, I am sorry to say, few American diplomats are able to achieve because of an insufficient knowledge of the cultures, the languages and the backgrounds of the countries with which they are dealing. That is why I say that he is a role model, and when he was named Ambassador to the United Nations, I really stood up and cheered because I can just picture him in New York, off having lunch with some ambassador from a Third World country who gets up and rants and raves against the United States, but who will go out to lunch with Ambassador Walters and be charmed, because this is what happens.

Little by little, chipping away at these kinds of attitudes, over and over again, day after day, with patience, with fortitude, with good humor, with all of these things, he wins friends for the United States. He is precisely the sort of person who should teach in the school of diplomacy and bring up a whole new generation of diplomats, and, if ever he retires from the government, which I earnestly hope will never be the case, I am sure that Professor Valenta and I and the people of the University of Miami will make him an offer he cannot refuse so that he will start such a school.

It is my enormous pleasure and great honor to introduce the United States Ambassador to the United Nations, Vernon Walters.

Ambler H. Moss, Jr.,

Dean, Graduate School
of International Studies
University of Miami
January 8, 1988

Reflections on Gorbachev's Policies

Thank you very much, Ambler, Mr. Rubel, Dr. Valenta, and other distinguished guests here today. I am delighted to be here. I must tell you that what Ambler was talking about is the fact that, if you have been a general and you get into diplomacy and you don't bang your fist on the table, as they expect you to do, you get several 'brownie points' for it. When I got into the United Nations, they said that they knew the military connection and the fact that I had been deputy director of the CIA, and they said, "You know, when you did not bang your fist on the table and call everybody to attention, we thought: This is a pretty good guy." Now that is a cheap way to get to be a good guy. I also recall another story, about the difference between the diplomats and the military. Now, this story was obviously told by a businessman. He said that there is none: Both of them do nothing, but the military gets up very early in the morning to do it with great discipline, and the diplomats do it late in the afternoon in utter confusion. It is false in both cases, as you know. I am happy to have this opportunity to talk a little bit about the recent summit and its impact on regional differences between the Soviet Union and the United States. Attention was focused enormously on the arms control agreement. Of course, that agreement was reached and prepared long before the summit. In fact, on the night of the White House dinner they exchanged bound, printed copies of the treaty, each of which was about as thick as the Palm Beach phone directory. I was rather startled to see how many clauses there were in it. That captivated the attention of most people. That, in a sense, was the chief Soviet interest:obtaining an agreement on arms. Why did they want such an agreement? Some people said that Ronald Reagan needed the agreement more than Mikhail S. Gorbachev did. Absolutely not! Ronald Reagan is guaranteed to be president of the United States until January 20, 1989. Mikhail Gorbachev will probably be there on that date, but he does not have a similar guarantee. If you look at Soviet history, you will see that, with the exception of Malenkov, who was an aberration, all Soviet leaders have died in power except Khrushchev, the reformer.

So I think that Gorbachev had a greater need to produce something that would be palatable to the Soviet people. I think that with the greater exchange that Khrushchev allowed and made possible, there was a growing realization in the Soviet Union that it is not really a modern industrial state in all areas. In the area of space and the area of weaponry, it is, but in some of the other areas it is not. When I was in the Soviet Union last year, I was told this anecdote. A Soviet citizen is notified of the date on which he could take delivery of the car for which he had been paying for the last three years. So, he asks what that date is. They tell him the 7th of December of 1992, and he asks whether it will be ready in the morning or in the afternoon. They ask why he needs to know, and he says, because the plumber is coming in the morning.

This anecdote illustrates the fact that the Soviets have an enormous problem in providing consumer goods and services. If you travel in the Soviet Union, you will see these so-call remote installations, which are fix-it stations. They fix everything from the pressure cooker—if one is lucky enough to have one—to the automobile, to the washer, to anything else. I think that Mr. Gorbachev is aware of these deficiencies, and he feels he has to change them. However, the difficulty is to change within the basic framework of an economic system that is, theoretically, noble and altruistic, that is the socialist system, but does not work. And he has decided to try something that he has not tried before, and that is decentralization of decisions in economic areas. But he needed something to

establish himself. The Russians are very proud people, and they are always suspicious that foreigners look on them as barbarians. It is curious that, at about the same time that Alexis De Tocqueville wrote his book about the United States, another Frenchman, the Marquis de Custine, was writing an absolutely fascinating book about Russia. It was written in 1849, during the reign of Tsar Nicholas I.

Custine described that, while in Europe there was no such thing as a passport, a traveler had to get one to go to Russia. He was taken off the ship at the fortress called Kronstadt, which is an island on the approach to St. Petersburg. There, he was asked these questions: What is the purpose of your visit to this country? Do you intend to write a book or an article about your experiences here? Do you have any letters of recommendation to people in this country? Where else do you expect to travel outside of St. Petersburg? Are you on a secret mission for your country, your government or private organization? Do you intend to publish any magazine articles about your experiences in this country?

When Custine finally got ashore, he decided to go to the Schlusselburg Fortress near St. Petersburg to see the tomb of Tsar Ivan VI, a young tsar who had died in suspicious circumstances about two hundred years before. So he hired a boat and he went down to Schlusselburg and when he pulled up to the dock, an officer leaned out and asked him the purpose of his visit. When he replied that he wished to see the tomb of Ivan VI, the officer asked Custine how he knew that Ivan VI was buried there. Custine showed him a guide book published in France, whereupon the officer replied that Custine never should have brought that book into Russia because it contained classified information.

In Russia, Custine witnessed the reconstruction of the Mikhailovskii cathedral, which had been badly burned in a fire. Nicholas I had ordered the rebuilding to be completed in twelve months. The work was almost finished by that deadline but there was trouble getting the frescoes on the interior walls to dry. Someone suggested that it was necessary to heat the building to fifty degrees centigrade. So they heated it to that temperature, which is the equivalent of 110 to 120 degrees Fahrenheit, and every now and then some of the workmen would come out of this heat and into the forty-degree-below-zero streets of St. Petersburg. Many of them would drop dead. Custine asked the master builder, "Why are you doing this?" The man looked at him and replied, "You Europeans think that we Russians are a bunch of oriental savages. We are not barbarians, we are a cultured people and we can do things just as well as you can."

That inferiority complex lingers to this day. The Soviets have it with us and they have it with the Chinese: the feeling that we regard them as being the savages of the steppes. So they have a very great need to show us how good they are. And they have shown us in some areas. But they have not shown us in the area of their economy, which is a disaster. They have three times as much farm land as we do, and yet they are unable to feed a population only slightly larger than ours. It is true that they have had seventy years of 'bad harvest' or 'bad weather,' and not many people have experienced that kind of 'misfortune.'

So Mr. Gorbachev decided that the Soviet Union should catch up. How does the Soviet Union go about this? For a while, the Soviets thought that they could do it through espionage, through buying, through smuggling and other things. For example, seven years ago, they acquired the manual of a U.S. reconnaissance satellite that operated on a different principle than the previous ones did. It took them seven years to set up a crude prototype. Retro-engineering is not easy; so they apparently have decided that the only way that technology can be acquired on a scale significant enough to change the whole economy is to lessen tension with the United States and with China. Therefore, we got the beginnings of *glasnost'* and *perestroika*. I do not know how long they will last. My guess would be somewhere between three and seven years, during which Gorbachev thinks that they will scoop up all this technology in

an open atmosphere of cultural exchanges, ballets, folk dances, and everything else.

However, this period of openness will also affect the Soviet Union more than he thinks it will. If any of you saw those pictures of Billy Joel in Leningrad, with Soviet teenagers leaping up and down waving Soviet and American flags and tearing off their teeshirts, you may wonder what their reaction will be when their young Komsomol leader comes to them and says, "Now we must resolutely apply the resolutions of the Twenty-seventh Party Congress." Perhaps they will not be as attentive as they ought to be. We have seen this idea of having a period of lessened tension with the West materialize, and the most visible evidence of this is an arms control agreement, which would also have an impact on the Soviet economy. The Soviets are spending seventeen per cent of their gross national product on arms, out of an economy that is less than half the size of ours. We are spending seven percent. Under President Kennedy, against a much weaker Soviet Union, we were spending nine per cent.

What will we see from this? The first visible evidence would be the Intermediate Nuclear Forces agreement to do away with an entire weapons system, signed in Washington in December 1987. That arrangement should greatly alleviate the Soviets' financial burden because such systems are very expensive, even in a socialist state.

Many people forget that the first person to suggest a zero option on theater nuclear weapons was President Reagan. They are acting as though the clever Gorbachev has foisted this idea on a poor, stupid President Reagan. That isn't the way it happened. President Reagan is the one who developed the zero-zero option, and, when he did, the Soviets absolutely refused it. They broke up the Geneva negotiations because of it. They said that if we deployed our missiles in answer to those in Europe, they would never negotiate. We deployed them, and they did negotiate. So I think that much of this talk about the wily Mikhail Gorbachev, and how he has outwitted our president, has been politically inspired.

Obviously, getting that treaty was the Soviets' major interest in the Washington summit. We had another interest. We had an interest in regional problems, specifically in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Cuba, Nicaragua and other areas. These issues are more sensitive to Gorbachev, and to the internal situation that he is trying to change. You see, I think that there is general agreement among the Soviet leadership about the need for change, but there is a difference of opinion as to how far to progress and at what speed. They live always in the fear that if they open the door too far, the worst of all nightmares will occur: the loss of the control of the state by the Communist Party, the one party. And that eventuality they regard as a catastrophe of the first magnitude.

Thus, Gorbachev knew that the arms agreement would go over well at home, but he may have been less sure about radical change on other sensitive issues. Soviet losses in Afghanistan have had on internal impact upon the Soviet Union. But the Russians are quite different from us; they will always proudly announce how many losses they have incurred, and the more losses they have, the prouder they are, whereas in America the loss of even one life is a great source of disturbance to us. Sometimes we lose perspective. When I was in Vietnam, one of the young soldiers was telling me what a terrible war it was, and I said, "You know, in the thirteen days of the Battle of the Bulge, we lost more men than we have lost here in five years." World War II was a different kind of war, fought on a different scale than the Vietnam War. In Vietnam, I was out one night in a rice paddy when a helicopter came in with breakfast and I was asked whether I wanted my eggs over easy or scrambled. My experience in Vietnam was different from anything I had experienced before.

The great problem we have to contend with in the area of regional conflicts is that the principal objective in Soviet foreign policy since the immediate post-war period has been to divide us from our allies. How do they do that? They tell our allies that they are leaning on a broken reed, because the United States is a

paper tiger. They say, "The Americans will bug out on you as they bugged out on the Vietnamese, and that led to two million boat people; they will bug out on you as they bugged out on the Cambodians, and that led to the genocide of three million people; they will bug out on you as they bugged out on the Laotians; they will bug out on you as they bugged out on the Shah, and on Haile Selassie."

Here is the reason why Nicaragua is so important to us. It is not a question of Soviet bases in Nicaragua or anything like that. It is the fact that, if it is proven that the United States is unable to prevent the establishment of a Soviet-client state a thousand miles from Houston or Miami, the Soviets will be in a splendid position to go to our allies like the West Germans or the Japanese and say, "Why don't you accommodate us while there is still time?" And that is why, for us, Nicaragua is not a regional problem, it is a problem of global proportions in which the credibility of the United States is at stake.

Afghanistan has been the source of great disturbance to the Soviets in the United Nations, where I work. Normally, they whip their so-called nonaligned friends together, and eighty-two percent of the time, these nonaligned states vote with the Soviet Union. In fact, it is quite interesting to recall that there are nineteen members of the United Nations—including Angola, Algeria, and India—that vote against the United States more often than the Soviet Union does. However, the fact is that Afghanistan has poisoned the Soviets' relationship with forty-four Muslim countries and, in fact, each year since I have been there, we have had a much larger majority voting to condemn their occupation of Afghanistan. This year, it was something like 124 to nineteen. Nineteen represents the hard-core Soviet bloc. I think that the Soviets made a political decision that this is one of the areas in which there must be movement. However, I must confess that I was a little disappointed that not much of this aspect was emphasized in the immediate aftermath of the summit; but, in my opinion at least, clearly there had been understandings reached that the Soviet Union and the United States would work further on the solution of these matters.

Now the Soviets have begun to leave Afghanistan. For the first time, they have apparently have given up the goal of establishing a government of national reconciliation around Mr. Najibullah [President of Afghanistan], who has been their puppet. That idea is a little bit like asking the French, after World War II, to form a government of national reconciliation around Pierre Laval. The idea did not have a bright future, and they seem discreetly to have prepared to drop it. Now, the problem is, what will they do about their friends? One of the young Soviets asked me about this question at the United Nations, and I said, "Well, I would charter seven or eight 747s, and take them all with you when you leave." But they cannot do that; it is not enough. They have thirty thousand people in the Afghan secret service that they will have to do something about.

The Soviets do have some excuses to justify their withdrawal. Originally, they said that they went into Afghanistan to foil the evil machinations of the United States, which was attempting to convert Afghanistan into a base. An agreement on a neutral Afghanistan, belonging to no bloc, with its own armed forces and without the military presence of any other people, can permit the Soviets to withdraw and still claim victory, and they could pretty much sell that to Soviet public opinion. I remember that, when I was in the Soviet Union recently, a Soviet deputy foreign minister said to me, "You must understand that now, with *glasnost'*, we also have a press problem." I said, "You do? Well, when *Pravda* writes an editorial with a headline saying 'The Soviet Government Is Wrong,' as one appeared in a prominent New York newspaper not long ago about the U.S. government, I will begin to believe that you have some of the same problems that we do."

Under the Brezhnev Doctrine, the chief Soviet interest was to make sure that no communist regime was removed once it had achieved power. In fact, there was only one such reversal of which I know, when the Romanian army invaded Hungary in 1921 and

ejected the government of Bela Kun. The Soviets want to give an impression of irreversibility to the establishment of communist governments. Therefore, I watch what is happening in Nicaragua with hope, hope that we will see a miracle because I know of no case in which a Marxist-Leninist regime has ever decommunized itself, or really accepted either the sharing of power with any other non-communist group or—the ultimate heresy—alternation in power. I watch with some interest but I am not very optimistic that we will see this development; if we do, it certainly will be a first. The one thing that was made clear to the Soviets at the summit was our interest in these areas, and the message was conveyed that what happens in Afghanistan, in Cambodia, in Nicaragua, in Cuba and elsewhere is important to the overall context of the Soviet-American relationship. Now, the Soviets have been slow to digest that message, but I think that it is beginning to sink in, and I think that what we have seen in Afghanistan is the first fruit. In the case of Cuba, as you know, the Soviets have always refused Castro what he most wanted, which was a defense treaty, and they have not given it to the Nicaraguans either. How much ballast the Soviet Union is prepared to let off now, I do not know. In Afghanistan, we have seen what seems to be a fairly major step, because it will not only remove them from there, but also destroy the myth that a communist government, once established, can never be removed. As we look at the world, we see that the authoritarian, right-wing, personalistic dictatorships have all been replaced by democracies. However, the collegial types of dictatorship, supported by huge single parties, have not yet been replaced anywhere of which I know.

So this withdrawal will be a very important event. I think that the Soviet people have a greater understanding of what is happening in the world around them than they have had before. For example, I was talking to one of my Soviet colleagues the other day, and we were discussing the war between Iran and Iraq. He said, "I suppose that, when this war is over, you will say," and he slipped into Arabic, "Glory to Allah." I replied, "No, personally I will say," and I slipped into Russian, "Our Father Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name..." When I did so, he picked me up and went right on to the end. I looked at him in mock astonishment and said, "So you know that prayer?" He responded quickly, "General, *everybody* in Russia knows that prayer!!"

On my latest trip to the Soviet Union, I went out to Zagorsk Monastery, where I had lunch with the archbishop. We ate caviar and drank vodka. That occasion was the first time I had seen vodka at any Soviet establishment in a long time, and I said to the archbishop, "Ah, here you have vodka." He said, "This is the Church, not the State." He added, "You know, the Church needs the State, but there are also times when the State needs the Church." I said, "Do you mean, for instance, during the war, when millions were dying, and Holy Mother Russia became important?" He said, "Like during the war when millions were dying, and Holy Mother Russia became important." There is in the fiber of the Soviet people a deep sense of patriotism, and it is important in our relations with them that we do not seem to be trying to humiliate them or bleed them. At the United Nations, I have said to them many times, "We are not trying to bleed you or humiliate you, we just want you to get out and let the Afghan people choose whatever government they want." And that is our policy not only in Afghanistan, but elsewhere as well: in Ethiopia where there is a Soviet Brigade, and in Cuba where there is a Soviet brigade. In Nicaragua there is no Soviet Brigade, but there is a regular zoo of Libyans, PLO and other odd characters assembled there.

I walked out on Mr. Ortega when he was at the United Nations in September 1987, an action for which I was criticized harshly by *The New York Times* and by *The Boston Globe.* They are not aware that, in the United Nations, an ambassador has the right to reply to any speaker except a chief of state. Therefore, when Mr. Ortega criticized the United States and its policies, it did not bother me. When he criticized the U.S. government, that did not bother me, either. However, when he said that Ronald Reagan was responsible for the deaths of 42,000 Nicaraguans, had destroyed the

people of Grenada, and was a senile old fool who did not know what he was reading at his desk, I simply did not feel like I could stay there. So, I got up and I walked out.

The Boston Globe chided me, saying that I should steady my nerves. I resisted the temptation to tell them that my nerves had seen me through four wars, and that I thought they should steady theirs instead, but I did not send that telegram. I regret it now, but it is a little too late to do anything about it.

I think it is an interesting time for us because we are going to have a lot more of this atmosphere of peace, love, flowers, honey, milk, and cultural exchanges, and, as Kipling said, "The bear is most dangerous when he is hugging you." I think that we would be well-advised to remember that saying. It is a time that is going to require extreme vigilance on our part. Yet it is a time of great opportunity for us, an opportunity to make the Soviets understand that there is a life other than the one they have been living; that they can have a better life; and that they can live with more freedom without the loss of their national rights, or their national interests, or anything else. For instance, when we get into this question of human rights, they say that that is an internal affair. It is not an internal affair. The Soviet Union signed the Helsinki convention, as the United States did, and that agreement went into these issues in very specific detail. It is our affair and we intend to pursue it, just as we intend, next month in Geneva, to pursue the resolution on human rights in Cuba. One hears a great deal about Chile. Chile is a military dictatorship that has the same population as Cuba. Last year, there were two thousand Chileans and fifteen million Cubans in exile, and to repeat my famous phrase—I don't know whether it is really famous, although I hear it come back to me now and then—no one has really given Castro credit for his greatest achievement, making Cuba the largest country in the world: the administration is in Havana, the government is in Moscow, the army is in Africa, and the population is in Florida and we welcome them. *Granma* [the official newspaper of the Cuban Communist Party] has just reported that there are now forty thousand Cuban troops in Angola. Cuba has about one-twentieth of the population of the United States, and so their military presence in Angola is the equivalent of the United States having 800,000 troops somewhere. That is a rather large commitment, about twice as large as the United States' involvement in Vietnam.

So, we intend to pursue these regional items, getting the Soviets out of Afghanistan, getting the Vietnamese out of Cambodia, effecting some basic change in the archaic way in which the Cuban government handles human rights. The whole of Central America is now governed by democracies, and now only Nicaragua is moving further into the grip of a dictatorship. I devoutly hope that Mr. Arias's plan works, but, as I say, I have yet to see a Marxist-Leninist regime decommunize itself. Maybe we will yet see that miracle. I hope so. It is vital that we continue to make the Soviets understand that all of these matters have a very, very great impact on the overall shape of Soviet-American relations. And I think that they do understand that now. We spoke about that in great detail to them while they were here.

I cannot tell you exactly how big a price they are prepared to pay for this atmosphere of peace, love, honey, butter and sugar, and only constant pressure will bring this about. If we want to get real results, we must persuade them fairly skillfully, and in a way that does not humiliate them. They have been cooperative for the first time in the Iran-Iraq war. Last February, they seemed very upset by the possibility that Basra might fall. After all, in the nineteenth century, Russia took an awful lot of territory from Iran, including the Baku oil fields, Bokara and Samarkand, and other areas. The idea of Iran, fifty million people triumphant, placing territorial demands on the Soviet Union, is not something to which the Soviets are looking forward. Thus, they have become more cooperative. I went to both Moscow and Beijing and obtained a promise of a vote in favor of the resolution calling for the cessation of hostilities in the Iran-Iraq war, and the promise, from both of them, that they would vote for the enforcement actions

foreseen in Article 7 of the United Nations Charter if one or both parties did not accept that resolution. At present, Iraq has accepted it and Iran has not, and we are moving to the time when we have to call in these promises, and see whether they are serious and whether they will live up to their agreement to vote for enforcement actions. For the first time, the United Nations has had a serious opportunity to do what it was created to do, put an end to war.

It is important to understand, however, that if we have an ability to influence the Soviet Union, it is because in the years since Mr. Reagan came to power, we have created a different military balance than the one he found when he came to Washington. Then, we were in a state of provocative weakness, which is the greatest of all dangers. I do not think that the Soviets intended to start a war, but if it looked so easy, they might have been tempted in that direction. That is no longer the case, and now, we have a real opportunity to pick up this challenge between the two systems and the two ways of life. In this atmosphere of greater interchange, we have the opportunity to show the Russian people what it is like to live without the system to which they are accustomed. The video cassette has been very helpful, illustrating that it is very difficult to prevent the infiltration of information. Many things are mitigating in our favor and I think we should not underestimate them.

I think that the Soviets are moving in many areas. For instance, they want to improve relations with China, which is why I believe that they will eventually get out of Vietnam. They know that the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia is an outrage to the Chinese. Moreover, now that they have built a second trans-Siberan railway 300 miles north of the old one, it will not be difficult for the Soviets to move some of those fifty-odd divisions along the Chinese border further back into the Soviet Union. The third obstacle to the improvement of Sino-Soviet relations has been Afghanistan; as we have seen, the Soviets will be moving on that one.

It is a time of great challenge for us, a time when we can either make terrible mistakes and sustain further losses, or create extraordinary opportunities to go forward. It was my interesting job to sit next to Mrs. Gorbachev at the White House State Dinner because I was one of the few people in the Cabinet who spoke some Russian. I had always been very interested in knowing whether her husband had stayed in his native town of Stavropol when the Germans occupied it during World War II, and no one had been able to tell me. I asked her, and she said that he did remain in Stavropol, but he was hidden in the house of friends. I then asked her where she met him, and she replied that she met him at Lomonosov University in Moscow, to which they had both been admitted without entrance examinations. I asked her how they both managed to avoid that requirement, and she said that he had won the silver medal in his high school and she had won the gold medal in her high school. I replied that I did not know that anyone had ever outdone the General Secretary, and she replied that she received the higher award because she agreed to study German, and he didn't.

These kinds of conversations are refreshingly novel, and reflective of the opportunities and challenges presented to the United States by the new leadership. I hope that we will be able to meet them with some degree of unity, typified by the old saying that "partisanship stops at the water's edge." It would be well if each party does not perceive this situation as an opportunity to make 'brownie points' against the other party. The greatest problem that we have in the United Nations is American credibility, and the ability of the United States to stick with a decision once it has been made. I don't know whether it is true, but I have been told that someone once said that it is very difficult to deal with the Americans, because one has to deal with three governments: the president who wants to do something, the Congress, which does not want him to do it, and the Supreme Court, which wonders whether the whole thing is unconstitutional.

Therefore, we have a credibility problem, which is why I hope that the INF treaty is ratified. Failure to do so will aggravate that problem. It has been said that the West

European governments are uneasy, but those states, without exception, endorsed the decision to sign that agreement. We kept peace in Europe for forty years before any of those theater missiles were deployed. However, at some point there has to be a balance between the conventional forces deployed there. There remain some 140 Warsaw Pact divisions facing forty-four NATO divisions, 45,000 tanks facing 18,000 tanks, 6,000 first-line aircraft facing 3,000 first-line aircraft. Creating a balance here is going to require a lot of will and ability. Unfortunately, in our country there are two tragic disasters: too few people study languages and too few people study history. If you don't know where you have been or where you are, it becomes very difficult to know where you are going.

Thank you very much.

Questions

You spoke earlier about the consequences of "glasnost" and "perestroika" extending beyond those intended by Gorbachev and the Soviet leadership. Would you elaborate on that point and on the question of what, if anything, the United States can or should do to facilitate Gorbachev's leadership and increase the chances of success of those campaigns?

Well, the first story I told, about the Mikhailovskii cathedral, was intended to show the continuity in Russian life. There are political changes, but there is a certain continuity. I have always wondered why the statue of Nicholas I, who was one of the most autocratic of all the tsars, and who sent Alexander Herzen into exile, was never torn down by the Bolsheviks. Later, when I heard that he was the author of the statement, "Where once the Russian flag is flown, it will never be hauled down," the reason suddenly dawned on me: Nicholas was their kind of guy.

I think the Soviet Union will change largely as a result of outside contacts, but I also think that there is considerable resistance within the system. I personally think that Gorbachev has about an even chance to win the day. There will be changes, from the contact with the West and its open societies. There is now some freer discussion in the Soviet press, and there will be more. Religious tolerance is an area that is very difficult, and I think that this question of human rights is important if we want to bring the standards of Jewish emigration up to levels close to those under Khrushchev, which hit 79,000 in one year. Last year there were 7,000 Jewish emigres, which is better than the year before; but that number is still very small.

We do have an opportunity to influence them. I notice that the Poles have stopped jamming the Voice of America. One of our difficulties is that, for better or worse, through patriotism, schooling, the media, and other factors, probably a majority of the Soviet people have come to regard their government as legitimate. I do not think that that is true in any of the satellite countries, which makes *glasnost* so much more difficult. There, if you open the door, the plunge through that door is going to be much greater. If one reads the discussions of people like the East Germans, one notes a marked coolness to the whole business. An old story illustrates the reason: Two East German border guards are walking along the side of the Berlin wall. One says to the other, "What are you thinking? The other says, "I am thinking the same thing you are." The first replies, "In that case, I arrest you for treason to the German Democratic Republic." So openness is more of a problem in the satellites than it is at home, in the Soviet Union.

How can we affect the course of reform? The first and most important thing that we must not do is drown the Soviets in American holy water, and if anybody thinks that *Time's* choosing Gorbachev as its 'Man of the Year' is going to help the situation, he is mistaken. To be sure, it is going to help him with some Soviet citizens to whom it will be a matter of national pride, but I am not sure how much good it will do for Americans to think that he is such a great guy. Actually, we have to be very prudent about how we exert influence in this matter. We have got to work carefully at it, weighing the facts regarding the most advantageous moves on our part. We must be realistic, and keep in mind that the millennium has not arrived, and that peace is not guaranteed for all eternity, simply because Gorbachev is here. In Russia, nothing is guaranteed for all eternity. So it is going to require a lot of statesmanship on our part, and I mean bipartisan statesmanship. We must rebuild the old bipartisan foreign policy, of which the NATO alliance is the only remaining fragment. We must be careful not to give the impression that we are a state that is incapable of having a central government that makes decisions. Any country with 535 secretaries of state—that's often the way congress acts— is in big trouble. We have got to try to present a face toward them which is the

face of all the American people, the last, the biggest and the strongest defender of freedom. I could not venture right now an exact policy; that is something that should be studied very carefully, and when that study is ready it should be brought to the attention of the policymakers.

Do you see a new era of detente, similar to the one that followed the Vietnam conflict, as a possible evolution of Soviet-American relations in the near future? If so, what will change in the two superpowers' relations with the People's Republic of China?

First of all, the previous period of detente did not come after the Vietnam War; it came during the Vietnam War. At the very time when Mr. Nixon decided to resume the bombing of Hanoi and the mining of the harbor of Haiphong, the Soviets renewed the invitation to Mr. Nixon to come to Moscow. The Soviets understand the kind of language that Nixon was speaking.

If a new period of detente arises, it will depend on whether the Soviets really want this peace in order to improve the living standard of their own people. After all, they have the largest country in the world and unlimited resources, and they should be living better than anybody else. As I have said, the present is a time requiring great prudence on our part.

With regard to the superpowers' relationship to the People's Republic of China, I don't think that very much is going to change. I think that the U.S. government is intelligent enough to realize that China is not a card we can play against the Soviet Union or the Soviet Union against China. In fact, China has more people than the United States and the Soviet Union put together by a factor of two. Nor do I think that the Chinese strategy will greatly change. There is an old Chinese proverb: "Against the Far Barbarians, use the Near Barbarians; against the Near Barbarians, use the Far Barbarians." The Chinese certainly will welcome the evacuation of the Soviets from Afghanistan, they will be delighted with the removal of the Vietnamese from Cambodia, and they will not be displeased by the limited withdrawal of the Soviet forces in the Far East.

But you will notice that in the intermediate range missile negotiations it was we who insisted that none of these weapons would be redeployed to the Far East, and that the whole series of weapons was to be destroyed. At the beginning, the Soviets offered to take them out of Europe and leave one hundred in East Asia, an indication of their continued wariness regarding China. We said no, the whole system must go.

Gorbachev has advocated "perestroika"—restructuring—for the Soviet economy. The Soviets also have a plan for international "perestroika", which they refer to as a System for Comprehensive International Security. Is the Soviet proposal winning any support in the United Nations? Also, how does the U.S. boycott of this past summer's United Nations Conference on Disarmament and Development help us to meet this Soviet challenge?

I think that the United States regards the United Nations Charter as providing all the facilities necessary to both of those projects. We are trying to get a reduction in the UN budget and reform and we don't see the need to set up new structures within the United Nations requiring more people and more money when the UN charter already provides all the means for discussing these things. In fact, we have a meeting of the Disarmament Committee very soon, and we just don't want to see duplication of effort within the United Nations.

But is the Soviet program winning any support?

Well, the United States doesn't have much support internationally, because if one acts against the United States it rarely retaliates. If one does something against the Soviet Union, one's life may become more unpleasant. When we bombed Libya, all of the Arab countries banded together and denounced us with the other so-called "nonaligned" countries—I don't believe they are nonaligned—to condemn us. Later, nearly all of the same diplomats came by my office to congratulate me for what the United States had done. There are really two standards at the

UN, the public standard and the private standard. As a matter of fact, that action was greatly criticized within the United States. But the fact is that it bombed Mr. Qadaffi out of the terrorist business. Other people are running it now. He has been very, very quiet since then.

Isn't a United States strategy of "being tough" with the Soviet Union a counterproductive approach, both in the sense that it is a condescending effort to impose conditions on Soviet behavior, and likely to lead to a conservative backlash?

That's a good question. As you know, there is a Soviet law that deals with criticism of the government, calling it anti-Soviet activity and providing that offenders go to jail for it. It's hard to say whether increased scrutiny from foreigners, as part of this new atmosphere, will lead to a change in this. The best way we can encourage change is not to try to do it publicly, and outdo the Soviets in debates, but rather, in private talks with them. Occasionally, I talk to the Soviet military in that way. One of them recently said to me, "I am so tired of being asked 'what are you going to do about Afghanistan?' or 'what are you going to do about Cam Ranh Bay?' or ~'what are you going to do about the Gulf war?'" Another said to me, "I am up to here with these little regional wars." So I think the best policy we can adopt here is one that is not terribly visible. The more the Soviets get out into the rest of the world, the better it will be, because they will see how other people live.

You know, they talk to us about our homeless and our other domestic problems. But the unemployment benefit in the United States is higher than the minimum wage of the Soviet worker and will buy a hell of a lot more. If you were to get involved in an open hassle with them, and were to use that fact acrimoniously, you would humiliate them. I think you have to say it in a gentle way. Many of them did not select this system, they were born into it; and there is a growing understanding that it doesn't work, or it doesn't work as well it should. If the Soviet Union were not the biggest country in the world with the greatest resources in the world, it would be a colossal disaster. It is a disaster anyway, and it is that disaster and the knowledge of it that has moved a large group of the Politburo to support the new policies. So it is again a question of how to do it in the right way. That needs a lot of study, a lot of care and a lot of knowledge of Russian and Soviet history and culture.

Unfortunately, opportunities for such study are not as abundant as they should be in this country. That is why what Professor Valenta is doing here is extraordinarily important. You cannot deal with a people if you do not understand their language, their history, or the things that are important to them. If you understand those things, you have an extraordinary ability to reach them on a personal level. A high-ranking Soviet official based in New York called me up the other day to wish me a happy birthday. That would not have happened a couple of years ago.

You spoke earlier about NATO as the last remaining fragment of the foreign policy consensus formed by the Western democracies after World War II. I would say that that is perhaps a too-generous assessment of the relationship between the United States and its West European allies, who seem more appreciative of U.S. protection than they are of their own obligations. Would you care to comment on this assessment?

To be sure, our allies have differed with us, but that is the difference between allies and satellites. Allies often differ with one another, and besides, they are 6,000 miles closer to the problem than we are. During the 'sixties and 'seventies, all the Europeans said to us, "Get out of Vietnam!! Get out of Vietnam!!" When we got out of Vietnam, they said, "My God, you were bad, how can we trust you anymore?" You know, with our European allies, we have two problems. If we show any flexibility with the Soviet Union they say, "My God! This is another Yalta, they are going to sell us out;" if we show any firmness, they say, "The mad cowboys are going to set off World War III." The other problem is that they are always telling us, "You know, you Americans really have no sense of historic perspective

like we older nations do." To that, I always respond, "Yes, and when you older nations with great perspective were running the world, between World War I and World War II, you gave us twenty-one years of peace. Since we naive, credulous stumble-bum Americans have participated, we have had forty-two years of peace."

The fact that there are differences in the alliance is perfectly normal. For instance, there are a number of countries that have painted themselves into a position of support for the Sandinistas when they thought that the government of Nicaragua was really a democratic regime, and now it is a difficult thing for them to recant. Armando Valladares' wife went to see a prominent Swedish official, and she said to him, "You understand that Cuba is no paradise," to which he replied, "All Europeans know that Cuba is no paradise. "She said to him, "Well, why don't you say so?" "Oh!" he said, "That would help the Americans." Again, there is a little bit of this David and Goliath nonsense: Nicaraguans are being persecuted by the big, bad United States. There is also political involvement. The majority of the Democratic Party in our country opposes aid to the Contras, and it is perceived abroad that, if the Americans are divided on this issue, it is safe to take a position against the U.S. government. The totalitarian regime is capable of performing aerodynamically impossible turns. You know that for three years after Hitler came to power the German air force was still training in Russia.

Is that the reason why the FSLN has been successful in portraying itself as a nationalist revolution with socialist overtones?

Not really. Everybody that knows the FSLN government also knows that it is a communist regime. But it isn't presented like that in the media, and for saying so, one is likely to get into trouble with the media. That's a fact.

There is the opinion that the authoritarian aspect of the FSLN regime, and its reliance upon the Soviet Union, are the results of pressure by the United States. Would you care to comment?

Well, the United States tried everything not to pressure the FSLN. We received the *comandantes* in the White House, we gave them 289 million dollars in aid in the first three years that they were in power, and we did everything we could to help them. We may be still the largest donors in economic aid. The idea that we pushed them into the arms of the Soviets is nonsensical. We didn't. That is where they intended to go from the beginning. You know, the 289 million dollars that we gave them in three years is twice as much as we gave Somoza in the preceding fifteen years. The idea that we pushed them into the arms of the other side is ludicrous. I once asked Fidel Castro if we pushed him into the arms of the Soviets. He emphatically denied this, claiming that no one pushed him anywhere. Yet some of us keep up this fiction with Nicaragua, that it was a cruel, harsh Reagan administration that drove these fine, upstanding democrats into the arms of the Soviet Union. To me, that is putting party interest before the national interest.

What will be the outcome of the vote next month on the U.S.-sponsored U.N. resolution regarding Cuba's violations of human rights?

I certainly hope that we will be successful. We have tried this kind of thing before, and a number of countries had various stories about how their delegations did not get the right message, and so forth. This year we are making it plain. You know, I told the United Nations in October that we were going to bring this up in February, and yet a number of Latin countries said, "Oh, we were taken by surprise; we did not know that the Americans were going to bring this up. They suddenly rushed this onto the agenda." We did not rush anything onto the agenda. They had several months' notice, and, this time, it will be harder to use that kind of excuse. This time, we will see who will stand up on behalf of the silent prisoners in Cuba and who won't.

It has been noted that the Cuban government is quite reluctant to adopt any of the

Gorbachev-style reforms, and that the Soviet Union is reevaluating its financial commitments to its Third World allies. Do these two facts provide any clues at all to the future course of Soviet-Cuban relations?

Well, I know that the Vice President of Cuba wrote an article saying that *glasnost* and *perestroika* were not for use in Cuba. We shall see some difference there, but I think that Castro has always found it difficult to take direction from elsewhere, and so it will be interesting to watch that. If the Soviets are willing to throw Najibullah overboard, there may be some hope that they may be willing to throw Castro overboard. Three billion dollars a year is a lot of money in anybody's counting, even in rubles.

Is there room there for a warming of relations between Cuba and the United States?

Perhaps, but I am inclined to be pessimistic about that development. We've got diplomatic relations with Nicaragua, but we don't have diplomatic relations with Cuba. In the United Nations, the Cuban ambassador hardly ever talks to me.

In view of your experience with Cuban affairs, I was surprised to read in The Miami Herald that you were not consulted in regard to the U.S. government's recent negotiations with Cuba on the issue of emigration from that country. Can you say anything about this?

To be sure, in a bureaucracy as big as ours, that happens. For instance, I often find that important telegrams are not slugged "U.S.-U.N.," but the fact that we are not in Washington makes it somewhat understandable. An occurrence like this is an exceptional and not a habitual thing, and I do not want to belabor it. I was asked specifically if I had known about it, and I said I hadn't. That is the only reason I brought it up. I do not want to continue. I do not think it is a live issue. I think I made my point and I do not think they will forget about me easily the next time.

Has the United States made any kind of formal reaction, or specific plans, regarding Castro's statements on migration of Cuban nationals?

Well, our position is well known. We have taken more Cuban emigres than anybody else. We would like to see a situation where there would be no requirements for emigres, and those emigres could go home without fear for their lives, their safety, or their property. We would also like to see guarantees of rights of opposition, so that the Cuban people would have a choice in determining what kind of government they wanted. You know, any country from which fifteen per cent of the population has fled, especially when it's an island and it is difficult to leave, has a serious problem with its people. We would like to see that pressure taken off, and the Cuban people, like most of the other people in the Americas, given a chance to decide who they want to rule them, and not have one ruler imposed on them indefinitely.

Of course, if you look around you here you will see that the Cubans in Florida have added greatly to our culture, to our life, to our business and everything else. And it is just not the American position to turn the back on people who are fleeing for their lives. So we ought to maintain our policy of welcoming the victims of oppression.

We don't welcome all victims of oppression. The Haitians come to mind as an example of an exception.

Well, we let more people in than anyone else. I always tell my Soviet colleagues that their problem is how to keep their people from getting out; ours is how to prevent the millions who want to come in from coming in. After all, last year the United States amnestied twelve million immigrants, more than the whole population of Cuba.

What are the Soviets' expectations regarding the outcome of the Iran-Iraq war?

I cannot think for the Soviets, and it would not be fair for me to express a Soviet point of view. Let me put it this way: they would be

more alarmed by an Iranian victory than an Iraqi victory, since Iran has territorial claims on them.

Mr. Gorbachev has been in power since 1985, and there are the same number of Soviet troops in Afghanistan as before; the Soviets are still supporting one-party states or movements in Africa; the Syrians were recently furnished with two million dollars worth of Soviet arms; and the flow of oil and arms to Nicaragua continues. Given these continuities, on what grounds is your confidence regarding change based?

If I radiated confidence to you, you misunderstood what I said. I said that it is a possibility. I do not have any confidence. I was the one who said they have been capable of having British and French military talks in one room while signing a pact with Hitler in the other. So if I gave you the impression that I have great confidence in them, I misspoke. I know who they are. I know what they are doing. I have been in Syria, and I've seen the Soviet equipment there. But there may come a point when they figure that a different policy is to their greater advantage. One of the primary measures is Jewish emmigration. Brezhnev let 79,000 people out in one year. Gorbachev let 7,000 out last year. Now, they understand that this a matter of vital interest to us and that, unless their performance is better, they are not going to get further at bewitching us. And we know what they are doing in Nicaragua. We know what they are doing elsewhere, and, in fact, we have publicized it.

What safeguards is our new Secretary of Commerce adopting to ensure that technology transfer remains consistent with U.S. national security interests?

I am not familiar enough with Mr. Verity; he has only been a member of the Cabinet a short time. There does exist, however, a NATO-wide organization called COCOM [Coordinating Committee on Export Controls], which selects very carefully what technology can be passed and what technology cannot be, and we are founding members of COCOM. I think that Gorbachev will continue to try to obtain high-level military technology through the same means as before. What we have to ensure is that the other kinds of technology do not go out in a completely uncontrolled fashion. In fact, we have had very serious problems with some of our allies like Norway and Japan on this issue and we have made them feel our displeasure, economically as well as verbally.

Will the verification procedures stipulated in the INF Treaty really enable the United States to monitor Soviet commitment to the treaty?

We will have verification groups inside the Soviet Union at the factories where these things are built, and that is a degree of access that no one else has ever had before. They will have access to us, but, then again, they have had access all along. In the treaty, there are large chapters on verification, and as Mr. Reagan said to Mr. Gorbachev, "Trust, but verify."

You know, the idea that we do not understand who these people are is ridiculous; we do understand them. We want to see if we can change them more than they can change us, and it should be easier in the near future.

For the Record

"Miami: Exciting Hub of Foreign-affairs Studies"
Carlos Verdecia
Viewpoints, Editorial Board
The Miami Herald
January 14, 1988

Vernon Walters, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, came to Miami last week and spoke his mind on every international topic under the sun. He blasted Fidel Castro's human-rights record; expressed skepticism about Daniel Ortega's "democratization"; questioned Mikhail Gorbachev's *perestroika*; and celebrated Moammar Gadhafi's silence since the U.S. air raid on Tripoli. The diplomat's sharp, polyglot tongue spoke at ease; his gigantic international persona seemed right at home.

And at home he was. Honored in a luncheon by the University of Miami's Institute for Soviet and East European Studies (ISEES), Walters spoke on "Summit III: Implications for Cuba and Nicaragua." As he spoke and answered questions, it became clear that perhaps no other U.S. city could have welcomed Walters with an audience as alert and interested in his topic as Miami.

Dr. Jiri Valenta, director of ISEES, knows this. He smiles impishly when people run to share their discovery of what an ideal place for foreign-affairs academia our international city is.

"Miami is favored by its multiracial and multinational environment," says Dr. Valenta. "Our students represent Miami's unique melting pot, which has a great deal to offer in increasing understanding of the tensions and conflicts among countries and their political and ethnic groups."

The ISEES functions under the aegis of the Graduate School of International Studies (GSIS). Eight of its 15 students have published books or articles on carefully researched international topics. To expand his student body, Dr. Valenta is appealing to local private groups and institutions for help with fellowship funds.

We receive from prestigious national foundations of different political persuasions, and from the U.S. Government, help which we use to publish influential books and essays and organize international conferences." Dr. Valenta says. "It's the fellowships that we're trying to increase."

The ISEES was created in October 1986. Ambassador Ambler Moss, GSIS dean, announced it on the occasion of Zbigniew Brzezinski's lecture on "Game Plan: How to Conduct the U.S.-Soviet Contest." In little over a year, the ISEES has held seminars and conferences whose participants could well make the pages of a foreign-policy *Who's Who.*

Three months ago, the ISEES sponsored a one-day conference on "Soviet Policies in Afghanistan and Iran." High-ranking U.S. military officers and two Afghan *mujahedeen* rebels participated.

The specialized institute couldn't have been place in more-expert hands. Jiri Valenta ranks among the more-respected "Sovietologists" in the United States. A member of the Council on Foreign Relations—a selective intellectual club of foreign-affairs specialists—Dr. Valenta is frequently consulted by Washington policy makers on issues ranging from Eastern Europe to Central America. His books include *Soviet Intervention in Czechoslovakia, 1968: Anatomy of a Decision; Grenada and Soviet-Cuban Policy; and Conflict in Nicaragua: A Multidimensional Perspective.* His wife, Virginia, coauthors some of his work.

Under Valenta's direction, the ISEES focuses on what he calls "East-South issues," which relate to Soviet-bloc involvement in Third World countries.

"Most universities concentrate on plain East-West issues, such as arms-control and other security matters," Valenta says. "They neglect the East-South relationships, forgetting that the use of Soviet force in Latin America, Africa, and Asia can seriously jeopardize U.S.-Soviet relations."

One of Valenta's more-pressing priorities these days is to watch changes inside the

Soviet Union and the repercussions of Mikhail Gorbachev's *glasnost* and *perestroika* in Cuba and Nicaragua. The ISEES is privileged to do this research work in a city such as Miami. We Miamians are even more privileged—and should be proud to be the site of such excellent, high-level academic accomplishment.

"A good word for *glasnost*, there and here"

Louis Salome
Editorial Page Editor
The Miami News
January 11, 1988

They don't come more real than Vernon Walters. A burly, florid man who can tell spy stories in eight languages, Walters is tailored for the larger-than-life role he has played in the cellars, attics and front rooms of U.S. military intelligence and diplomatic history for 47 years.

Before being named the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations almost three years ago, Walters was ambassador-at-large under President Reagan, senior adviser to Secretary of State Alexander Haig, deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency from 1972 until 1976, and from 1941 until 1976 he served in the U.S. Army, retiring as a lieutenant general.

Walters didn't learn eight languages for nothing. He talks a lot, although like all good intelligence officers and diplomats, he doesn't always say a lot.

When the opportunity came last Friday to hear Walters speak at a luncheon sponsored by the University of Miami's Institute for Soviet and East European Studies, I showed up hungry in many respects. I had interviewed Walters on a television show previously, but that format is more structured than revealing.

In a freewheeling speech, Walters proved that if anyone talks enough, the implications are broader than the words themselves.

Walters said the Soviet Union under Mikhail Gorbachev would change largely as a result of the broader contacts the people would have with the outside world.

True enough. But the flip side of that statement applies to Americans, and it is just as important. The United States will change, too, largely as a result of the contacts Americans have with Soviets and other peoples.

Walters noted that too few Americans study languages and history: "If you don't know where you've been, how are you going to know where you're going?"

Americans are actually afraid of learning other languages, even afraid of people who know them. And we don't teach history anymore, we teach civics, which is what we used to teach to kids who supposedly couldn't learn history. What geography most of us know centers around how to get from Miami to Fort Lauderdale on I-95.

Walters' comment touches on a deeper problem. While the rest of the world is learning more about us all the time, Americans are becoming more insular. We know even less about the history of other countries than we know about our own. That ignorance is showing up in industry, trade, marketing and ingenuity.

"Fervent anti-communist" is Walters' middle name. Yet his fervor is tempered by reality when he discusses the changes occurring in the Soviet Union under Gorbachev and *glasnost.*

"I personally think he (Gorbachev) has a better than even chance of winning the day," Walters said. He also noted that Nikita Khrushchev, another reformer, is the only Soviet leader who did not die in office.

The Soviets generally agree with *glasnost* and *perestroika,* or economic restructuring, he said, and the only debate concerns how far the reforms go and at what speed they occur. "I don't know how long it will last," he added. "I expect he (Gorbachev) wants it to last three to seven years."

The most critical aspect of *glasnost* is not so much what the Soviet leaders are willing to give, but what the Soviet people try to take as the lid is lifted. Walters believes the reforms will affect the Soviet Union more than Gorbachev thinks they will.

He referred to Billy Joel's concerts in the Soviet Union last year, suggesting that as Soviet society opens up, young people may not be as attentive to government as they used to be. That's human nature. The more noises the Soviet people hear, the more mixed the message, the more diluted the official line.

Quoting Rudyard Kipling, Walters said, "The bear is most dangerous when he's hugging you." Still, he added, this is "a time of extra opportunity, a time of extra challenge, and I hope we can meet it" in a nonpartisan way. "All of the factors mitigating in our favor we should not underestimate."

I would add this thought. While the Soviets can profit collectively and individually from more exposure to the rest of the world, Americans can do the same.

"Lessons from Afghanistan—for U.S., too"
Louis Salome
Editorial Page Editor
The Miami News
January 12, 1988

In his speech here last Friday, Vernon Walters slipped once and said Vietnam when he meant to say Afghanistan. Many Americans have made that mistake, probably many Soviets, too. When the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations trips on the similarity, it suggests he understands more than he admits.

Walters, speaking at a luncheon sponsored by the University of Miami's Institute for Soviet and East European Studies, noted that the Soviets are on the verge of pulling out of Afghanistan. If they do and leave behind a neutral Afghanistan, Walters said the Soviets will proclaim their eight-year disaster a victory.

Sounds as if the Soviets are taking a form of the advice given by the late Vermont Senator George Aiken who suggested in 1966 that the United States declare a victory in Vietnam and get out.

But Walters said the Soviets look with pride on their casualties in Afghanistan, while Americans view such losses as disastrous. Tell that to the Soviets who don't see their children alive after they leave for Afghanistan. And if the Soviets love casualties, why don't they stay another eight years?

Listening to Walters, I wondered why U.S. officials often try to rewrite reality, and he provided some answers. One reason is because we are unwilling to learn from our own mistakes even if another country makes the point for us, and thus we can try again to alter the lessons of history.

Walters could have emphasized the limits of military power against a tough, proud, nationalistic people. He could have noted how difficult it is even for a superpower to subjugate a poor, underdeveloped, barren neighbor. He did, in fact, point out that "Afghanistan has poisoned their (the Soviets) relationship with 44 Moslem countries."

He could have said that when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan in 1979, many Americans believed the Soviets would triumph quickly because they would not be bound by moral or political restrictions as the United States was in Vietnam. And he could have noted that the Soviet failure contains lessons for others.

But Walters is not the Reagan administration's U.N. ambassador for nothing.

Walters doesn't see Afghanistan as the Soviet failure it is, but he does see Nicaragua as a potential failure for U.S. policy. He doesn't see a loss of credibility for the Soviets in Afghanistan, but he does see a loss of U.S. credibility if this country cannot thwart the Sandinistas. Sure, the two situations are different, but Walters is selective and myopic in pointing out the differences and the similarities.

Walters said the Soviets will invite U.S. allies and neutral countries to line up with Moscow if the United States cannot control what occurs just south of its border, and that others will do so because the United States will have lost credibility.

The Soviet Union, Walters said, wants to divide the United States and its allies, to expose the United States as a "paper tiger." And, he said, "That is why Nicaragua is so important to us." That's why Nicaragua is "a global problem of credibility for the United States."

Why would any country join with another country that invaded its small, powerless neighbor and tried to kill anything that moved, suffered heavy losses despite over-whelming superiority in every respect except that of the human spirit, before finally giving up? Why don't Walters and his White House bosses ask that question?

If the Soviets pull all the way out of Afghanistan, Walters said, it would destroy the "myth" that a communist government once established can never be removed.

But, he said the real danger in Nicaragua is that no Marxist-Leninist government has ever decommunized or shared power.

I miss the distinction, but that's not all I missed.

If U.S. credibility is at stake in Nicaragua, it is because this administration says it is. Raising the credibility issue is the administration's way of seeking support for its actions in Nicaragua; it is not because of Soviet words. And most of our allies already disagree with U.S. policy and conduct in Nicaragua, so what is there to divide?

Besides, if the administration really believes U.S. credibility is a stake, why not invade Nicaragua instead of hiring mercenaries to do a job they can't do?

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